

[By Odum](#)

No time to get into this now, so I'm going to have to lean on the language of the press release. I'll just say this is a good issue, and it puts the GOP into a "put up or shut up" type of corner. Of course, in the end, this Republican Party will do whatever it feels like, reason and consistency be damned, but Welch has been doing a terrific job using his position to keep calling out GOP nonsense loudly and relentlessly - and always in the context of presenting proactive alternatives.

Obviously, progressive policy doesn't even get a hearing in this Tea Party dominated House, but it's critical that Democratic leaders make enough noise to impact the public debate to whatever extent they can, and Welch has been doing a great job with that.

From the press release:

In a letter to the 12 members of the Super Committee, Welch and his House colleagues are urging that any deficit reduction plan require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate prescription drug prices on behalf of Medicare Part D beneficiaries. Such a move would significantly lower the cost of prescription drugs for seniors and save up to \$156 billion over ten years.

In June, Welch introduced the Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act of 2011. The legislation would help the Super Committee meet its target of \$1.5 trillion in budget savings.

"The Super Committee is facing many difficult decisions," Welch said. "One easy decision would be to put the federal government's purchasing power to work to save billions of dollars a year. Paying retail rates for wholesale purchases is a good deal for the pharmaceutical industry but a bad deal for the taxpayer. At a time of fiscal belt tightening, we simply cannot afford to continue this misguided policy."

Welch's letter is signed by 77 House members ([here's a link to a pdf](#)).